



LAND USE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Planning Commission Staff Report



HEARING DATE: May 20, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO: 4

Project Description

Vicinity Map

APPLICANT: **CITY OF REDLANDS**
APN: **292-041-08,09,17 & 38**
PROPOSAL: GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION
COMMUNITY: EAST VALLEY CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA
THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT
LOCATION: EAST SIDE OF NEVADA STREET, NORTH SIDE OF PALMETTO AVENUE
FILE/INDX: L616
STAFF: WINNIFRED WILSON



SITE DESCRIPTION

Parcel Size: 25 acres.
Terrain: Relatively flat topography.
Vegetation: Ruderal vegetation.
Existing Land Use: agricultural row crops/vacant land
General Plan Land Use Districts: EC/IR (East Corridor Regional Industrial)

SURROUNDING LAND DESCRIPTION

AREA	EXISTING LAND USE	LAND USE/OVERLAY DISTRICT	IL
North	City of Redlands Wastewater Treatment Plant	City of Redlands/East Valley Corridor Specific Plan – Public Institution	N/A
East	Orange groves	EC/IR (Regional Industrial)	IL-1
South	Orange groves	EC/IR and EC/PD	IL-1
West/ NW	City of Redlands Landfill site/orange groves	City of Redlands/East Valley Corridor Specific Plan – Public Institution	N/A

	AGENCY	COMMENTS
City of Sphere of Influence	N/A	
Water Service:	City of Redlands	N/A
Septic/Sewer Service:	City of Redlands	N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Additional information requested from the City of Redlands will be necessary to finalize the staff recommendation concerning consistency with the General Plan.

BACKGROUND:

On April 12, 2004, the City of Redlands submitted a letter (Exhibit A) to the County Land Use Services Department, stating its intent to purchase twenty-five acres of land in the area commonly known as the "Donut Hole". The Donut Hole is an unincorporated County area of approximately 1,100 acres, completely surrounded by the City of Redlands, yet not included in the City's sphere of influence. The County General Plan identifies the Donut Hole as the East Valley Corridor Planning Area. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65402 (c) (Exhibit F), the City has requested a determination of consistency of the proposed land use with the County General Plan. This section of state law also requires the agency with jurisdiction (the County) to respond with its determination within 40 days.

The subject property is located in the northwestern portion of the Donut Hole, adjacent to and south of the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility, which extends from Nevada Street to approximately 200 feet west of Alabama Street along the northern boundary of the Donut Hole. To the west, and northwest of the subject property is the City's 65-acre landfill/recycling plant. The wastewater treatment plant and landfill are located within the City of Redlands, surrounding the Donut Hole. Existing land use on the subject property consists of agricultural fields (row crops in rotation) interspersed with vacant land. There is an abandoned farmhouse located at the southwest corner of the site. The City has stated that it intends to acquire this property to preserve it as an open space buffer to protect the Wastewater Treatment Plant from encroachment by future development.

The following is an analysis of various goals and policies that should be considered in determining whether the City's proposed acquisition is consistent with the County General Plan. The City's intent for future use of the property was not stated very specifically in their request for a consistency determination. Therefore, staff has responded with a letter dated May 11, 2004 (Exhibit E) to request clarification and additional information necessary to determine consistency with the County General Plan.

ANALYSIS:

Goals & Policies Potentially Supportive of the City Proposal:

In general, retention of open space to provide a buffer between incompatible land uses is consistent with many General Plan policies. The following East Valley Corridor Planning Area policies encourage open space as a land use buffer or community amenity. The City has not indicated any plan to improve the subject property as a public open space. Simply adding acreage to the wastewater treatment plant site would not necessarily be consistent with these General Plan Policies. Staff has requested clarification of this issue.

East Valley Corridor Goals

- EC-6** Promote high quality development by protecting and enhancing existing amenities in the area, creating an identifiable community character, and adopting development standards and guidelines to ensure aesthetically pleasing design and maximum land use compatibility.
- EC-7** Create parks and open space areas which will meet the community's recreation needs in a meaningful way, and create areas which will enhance and add value to the community as a whole.

East Valley Corridor Policies/Actions

EC/CD-5 Ensure compatibility between adjacent land use types. Adopt standards to establish adequate buffers between industrial/commercial and adjacent residential uses through use of landscaping, grading, setbacks and/or walls.

EC/OS-2 Plan for the development of additional recreational facilities within the Planning Area.

- a. Establish a linear park along the Santa Ana River bluff.
- b. Designate locations for trails throughout the Planning Area as linkages between open space areas, as well as along the Santa Ana River.
- c. Wherever possible, utilize existing public lands for parks, recreation and open space in order to minimize costs.

Goals & Policies Potentially Hampered by the City Proposal:

The City has stated that it intends to acquire the subject property to “preserve open space” and protect the City’s facilities by maintaining an undeveloped “buffer” area. The City’s intent to hold vacant property would not be in direct conflict with the General Plan. However, the proposed acquisition would reduce the amount of developable land in the Donut Hole, possibly hindering the following goals and policies aimed at promoting development of the Donut Hole. Staff has asked the City for clarification of its intent for future use of the subject property and whether the City plans to acquire any other property in the Donut Hole.

East Valley Corridor Goal

EC-3 Provide for extension of public services in a logical and functional manner to minimize impacts on service purveyors while maximizing areas that can accommodate development in a timely manner.

East Valley Corridor Policies/Actions

EC/LU-1 Maximize generation of employment opportunities in a region which has a significant imbalance of housing versus employment opportunities.

- a. Create compatible, cohesive enclaves where industry can locate and operate without the encroachment of other non-compatible urban uses.

EC/LU-5 Coordinate with responsible agencies and jurisdictions to ensure responsible development within the Planning Area.

- a. Facilitate growth in the industrial sector consistent with the SCAG82 directive to balance the provision of jobs and housing in the Inland Empire region and to provide employment for a wide range of individuals and income groups.

EC/CS-2 Develop financing techniques to provide for extension of infrastructure facilities in the project area.

- a. Prepare an infrastructure financing plan to assess financing needs and alternatives.
- b. Identify funding methods which will facilitate the participation of all levels of government in providing funding for the required infrastructure.

Donut Hole Development Issues:

The Donut Hole is an important area for economic development, job growth and tax revenue in the unincorporated area of San Bernardino County. The County is also a member of the Inland Valley Development Agency (IVDA), a joint-powers redevelopment agency concerned with redevelopment of the San Bernardino International Airport and surrounding areas, including the Donut Hole. The City of Redlands is not a member of the IVDA, and the Donut Hole is not in the City's sphere of influence. If the City acquires property in the Donut Hole that will not be developed, it would make development of the remaining properties more costly by not participating in the costs of providing infrastructure. It would also impact future tax revenues to the County and the IVDA.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This proposal is not a project as defined by Section 21065 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore no action under CEQA is required.

CONCLUSION:

The 40-day time limit imposed by the Government Code to respond to the City's request has required staff to place this item on the Planning Commission agenda before having all the facts necessary to make a recommendation to the Commission. If the County fails to respond to the City's April 12 letter within 40 days, the proposed property acquisition shall be deemed consistent with the General Plan, pursuant to Government Code provisions referenced above. The May 11 letter from the County Land Use Services Department to the City of Redlands Utilities Department (Exhibit E) contains a list of questions and highlights the General Plan consistency issues discussed in this report. City of Redlands staff members have been cooperative in response to the request for additional information. They have offered a tour of the City facilities adjacent to the Donut Hole, and there are plans to meet on May 18 to discuss the consistency issues. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider the analysis in this staff report and make its determination concerning consistency of the proposed property acquisition by the City of Redlands with the County General Plan after hearing additional information to be provided on May 20.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Exhibit A: City of Redlands' letter dated April 12, 2004](#)

[Exhibit B: Vicinity Map](#)

[Exhibit C: Assessor's Parcel Map](#)

[Exhibit D: Site Photos](#)

[Exhibit E: County's letter dated May 11, 2004.](#)

[Exhibit F: California Govt. Code Sections 65400 – 65404](#)